



September 30, 2026

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson, Majority Leader Thune, Minority Leader Jeffries, and Minority Leader Schumer:

I write on behalf of the undersigned higher education organizations to ask that Congress take action to mitigate and, where possible, avert the harm caused by the administration's \$810 million rescissions package for fiscal year (FY) 2026¹ and take action to prevent these efforts in the future.² We remain concerned about the administration's efforts to change, terminate, and restructure programs that have been authorized and appropriated by Congress. The rescission package includes appropriated funding for which, in some cases, applicants have already competed. The efforts by the administration to terminate or redirect appropriated funding have caused confusion for students, researchers, and institutions.

For FY 2026, Congress appropriated \$70.4 million for the International Education and Foreign Language Studies (IEFLS) Domestic Programs,³ which provide grants to institutions of higher education to "support centers, programs, and fellowships to increase the number of experts in foreign languages and international studies, meet national needs, and strengthen the teaching of foreign languages and international education at all levels."⁴ Contrary to the administration's justification for the rescission request, these programs serve a critical role in ensuring that America has sufficient expertise in areas vital to our national security and ability to compete globally.

The proposal to rescind \$70 million in federal funds from IEFLS Domestic Programs comes well after the Department of Education (Department) has already renamed programs,⁵ created a new

¹ The White House. (2026, September 25). *President Trump takes historic action to eliminate wasteful and harmful spending*. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/2026/09/president-trump-takes-historic-action-to-eliminate-wasteful-and-harmful-spending/?source=email>

² This includes taking action to reverse any damage that will be caused by harmful cuts to federal higher education programs in the rescissions package. Also, the Government Accountability Office released a review of the rescissions package; Perez, E.E. (2026, September 29). *Impoundment Control Act of 1974: Review of the President's Special Message of September 25, 2026* [Letter]. Government Accountability Office. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/900/890546.pdf>

³ Consolidated Appropriations Act, P.L. 119-75, 119th Cong. (2026). <https://www.congress.gov/119/plaws/publ75/PLAW-119publ75.pdf>

⁴ U.S. Department of Education. (2026). *Higher education fiscal year 2027 budget request*. <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/fy-2027-congressional-justification-higher-education-113541.pdf>

⁵ U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). *International and foreign language education*. Retrieved September 28, 2026, from <https://www.ed.gov/grants-and-programs/grants-higher-education/international-and-foreign-language-education>

interagency agreement with the Department of State,⁶ and hosted a grant competition for both programs in June 2026.⁷ This pocket rescission will result in significant harm to programs of national importance and goes directly against the congressional intent expressed in appropriations.

We are concerned with the administration's pattern of cuts, transfers, and withholdings of funds authorized and approved by Congress. Compounding the challenge is the fact that the request for a rescission came only a few days before the end of the fiscal year, effectively denying Congress a chance to act on it in a timely manner. We are encouraged by the clear bipartisan opposition to this request expressed by leaders of the Senate Committee on Appropriations and hope Congress will appropriately reassert its constitutional role over the power of the purse.

We ask that Congress work to reverse the rescission of funding as requested by the administration. We strongly believe that stability should be restored to the budget and appropriations process and that any changes to federally funded programs should be addressed through the congressional appropriations process.

Sincerely,



Ted Mitchell
President

On behalf of:

American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
Association of American Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

⁶ U.S. Department of Education. (2026). *Interagency agreement between the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of State relating to international and foreign language education*. <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/ed-and-state-department-interagency-agreement-ifle-partnership-september-30-2025-113005.pdf>

⁷ U.S. Department of Education. (2026). *International and foreign language education*. Retrieved September 29, 2026, from <https://www.ed.gov/grants-and-programs/grants-higher-education/international-and-foreign-language-education>